769 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to
782 offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with dlo, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the blon'.

Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the [781] house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his
778 special protector, one of those gods (nyana) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more nyana, whose priest is the fa. The boli, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The nyana of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a n-ko whose boli was kept in a monkey skin. The boli is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the
794 nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut); Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara [Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets. It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

The youths follow, dressed in blouses knotted at the abdomen like towels and trousers into which three pairs of legs and three abdomens could fit without any trouble, dragging drums and bass drums. To keep up the march and cause it to be forgotten (they often come from far away) they shout a loud "you you" and make coarse jokes, which are here addressed to the fair sex more than elsewhere. Sometimes also, between two laughs, two great silly laughs, something like the crack of a whip is heard. This sound is made by five stubby fingers as they are applied to the cheeks of dear little angels, warming them. In fact, a band of little boys and girls trot among the youths in their birthday suits, passing to the right and to the left and winding between their legs, and patience wears out and quickly comes to an end.

After the young people come the old men; they are bent double, leaning on spears, and even while talking of future projects they recall the days of the past. It is quite apparent that there are no more like them, their equal cannot be found. Into the foroko, the goatskins they slip over their arms and fasten on their shoulders, they have slipped some good handfuls of cowrie shells for the mothers of the circumcised and excised, a box of the snuff that every self-respecting stranger gives as a gift to the men of the village, and finally the kola nuts that the sacrificer will chew before spitting the remains onto the front side of the god and some that, as educated, well-bred men, they keep for close friends. They also carry the hens or roosters for the sacrifice; these are attached by the feet to the straps of the foroko and hung head down their wings flapping horribly.

The human flood arrives at the gates of the village, stops a moment under the big trees, and tidies itself. The pointed caps /184/ are put a little to one side of the head, the blouses are unfolded, and nakedness is concealed. On the women's side there is indescribable hubbub, like the sound of the distant ocean at rising tide; they polish and adorn themselves and beautify themselves. On their feet they put little chains, on their arms heavy bracelets that knock together with the sound of old iron, and on their hips the young girls at least hang belts of beads sprinkled with little bells that tinkle at the slightest movement. In their noses they put crescents of gold or copper, in